



Aviation Investigation Final Report

Location:	Warrenton, Virginia	Accident Number:	ERA10CA355
Date & Time:	July 5, 2010, 11:00 Local	Registration:	N33554
Aircraft:	Piper J3C-65	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Defining Event:	Hard landing	Injuries:	2 None
Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General aviation - Personal		

Analysis

According to the pilot, he was taking off from runway 2, a 2,000-foot-long, 150-foot wide, turf runway. About halfway down the runway, at an altitude of 80 to 100 feet above ground level, the pilot realized that the airplane "was not climbing particularly well." The pilot elected to perform a precautionary landing because the airplane was not going to clear trees located near the end of the runway. He turned the airplane and attempted to land it in a field to the right of the grass strip. The pilot stated that he had a "rough landing," substantially damaging the left wing of the airplane. The pilot further stated the preflight and engine run-up were "good" before the accident flight. He commented that the decreased performance of the airplane was due to the hot and humid day, the airplane was full of fuel, and he had a passenger in the airplane. The pilot noted that his total flight experience was approximately 200 hours; of which, about 125 hours were in the same make and model as the accident airplane. The recorded weather at an airport located 2 miles north of the accident site, included winds from 300 degrees at 7 knots, clear skies, and a temperature of 33 degrees C.

Probable Cause and Findings

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident to be: The pilot's improper flare during a precautionary landing, which resulted in a hard landing.

Findings

Personnel issues

Incorrect action performance - Pilot

Aircraft

Landing flare - Incorrect use/operation

Factual Information

History of Flight

Landing-flare/touchdown	Hard landing (Defining event)
Landing-flare/touchdown	Abnormal runway contact

Pilot Information

Certificate:	Private	Age:	19, Male
Airplane Rating(s):	Single-engine land	Seat Occupied:	Rear
Other Aircraft Rating(s):	None	Restraint Used:	
Instrument Rating(s):	None	Second Pilot Present:	No
Instructor Rating(s):	None	Toxicology Performed:	No
Medical Certification:	Class 3 Without waivers/limitations	Last FAA Medical Exam:	August 13, 2008
Occupational Pilot:	No	Last Flight Review or Equivalent:	January 19, 2010
Flight Time:	200 hours (Total, all aircraft), 125 hours (Total, this make and model), 150 hours (Pilot In Command, all aircraft), 100 hours (Last 90 days, all aircraft), 65 hours (Last 30 days, all aircraft)		

Aircraft and Owner/Operator Information

Aircraft Make:	Piper	Registration:	N33554
Model/Series:	J3C-65	Aircraft Category:	Airplane
Year of Manufacture:		Amateur Built:	
Airworthiness Certificate:	Normal	Serial Number:	14028
Landing Gear Type:	Tailwheel	Seats:	2
Date/Type of Last Inspection:	March 31, 2010 Annual	Certified Max Gross Wt.:	1220 lbs
Time Since Last Inspection:		Engines:	1 Reciprocating
Airframe Total Time:		Engine Manufacturer:	CONT MOTOR
ELT:	Installed, not activated	Engine Model/Series:	A&C65 SERIES
Registered Owner:	On file	Rated Power:	65 Horsepower
Operator:	On file	Operating Certificate(s) Held:	None

Meteorological Information and Flight Plan

Conditions at Accident Site:	Visual (VMC)	Condition of Light:	Day
Observation Facility, Elevation:	HWY,336 ft msl	Distance from Accident Site:	2 Nautical Miles
Observation Time:	11:00 Local	Direction from Accident Site:	360°
Lowest Cloud Condition:	Clear	Visibility	10 miles
Lowest Ceiling:	None	Visibility (RVR):	
Wind Speed/Gusts:	7 knots /	Turbulence Type Forecast/Actual:	/
Wind Direction:	300°	Turbulence Severity Forecast/Actual:	/
Altimeter Setting:	30.05 inches Hg	Temperature/Dew Point:	33°C / 16°C
Precipitation and Obscuration:	No Obscuration; No Precipitation		
Departure Point:	Warrenton, VA (3VA3)	Type of Flight Plan Filed:	None
Destination:	Warrenton, VA (3VA3)	Type of Clearance:	None
Departure Time:	11:00 Local	Type of Airspace:	

Airport Information

Airport:	Flying Circus Aerodrome 3VA3	Runway Surface Type:	Grass/turf
Airport Elevation:	315 ft msl	Runway Surface Condition:	Dry
Runway Used:	02	IFR Approach:	None
Runway Length/Width:	2000 ft / 150 ft	VFR Approach/Landing:	Precautionary landing

Wreckage and Impact Information

Crew Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Damage:	Substantial
Passenger Injuries:	1 None	Aircraft Fire:	None
Ground Injuries:	N/A	Aircraft Explosion:	None
Total Injuries:	2 None	Latitude, Longitude:	38.550277,-77.715835

Administrative Information

Investigator In Charge (IIC):	Gretz, Robert
Additional Participating Persons:	Ramon Smeltz; FAA/FSDO; Herndon, VA
Original Publish Date:	December 20, 2010
Last Revision Date:	
Investigation Class:	Class
Note:	This accident report documents the factual circumstances of this accident as described to the NTSB.
Investigation Docket:	https://data.nts.gov/Docket?ProjectID=76591

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